DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 364 724 CE 065 259

AUTHOR Duggar, Margaret Lynn; And Others
TITLE Intergenerational Programs: Weaving Hearts and Minds.
INSTITUTION Florida State Council on Aging, Tallahassee.; Florida State Dept. of Education, Tallahassee. Div. of Vocational, Adult, and Community Education.
PUB DATE [93]
NOTE 28p.
AVAILABLE FROM Division of Vocational, Adult, and Community Education, Bureau of Career Development and Educational Improvement, Florida Education Center, Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Education; Age Differences; Age Groups; *Community Programs; Demonstration Programs; *Helping Relationship; *Human Services; *Intergenerational Programs; *Older Adults; Program Descriptions; State Programs; Youth
IDENTIFIERS *Florida

ABSTRACT

This publication spotlights the success and diversity of Florida's many intergenerational programs. It describes what intergenerational programming is and the three community needs that intergenerational programs address. Statistics on older persons as well as youth and families in Florida are followed by a listing of what intergenerational programs can do. The challenge of bringing people together to support each other, to learn, and to share learning experiences is set forth. Eight programs that represent a sample of some of Florida's intergenerational activities are profiled. They reflect diversity in scope of the programming, administrative complexity, and funding sources. Each program profile consists of some or all of these components: name of intergenerational program, agency, address, contact person, telephone number, program description, year program began, goals, program strengths and weaknesses, hours of service provided per month, special events/projects, materials developed, and comments. These programs are included: Academy of Senior Professionals at Eckerd College, Rainbow Intergenerational Child Care, School Mentors, My Favorite Older Person Essay Contest, Bridge Building, Hands Across the Ages, Sunshine Singers Intergenerational Chorus, The Silver Liners, Foster Grandparent Programs, and Rockin' Readers. Information on how to get involved is provided. (YLB)

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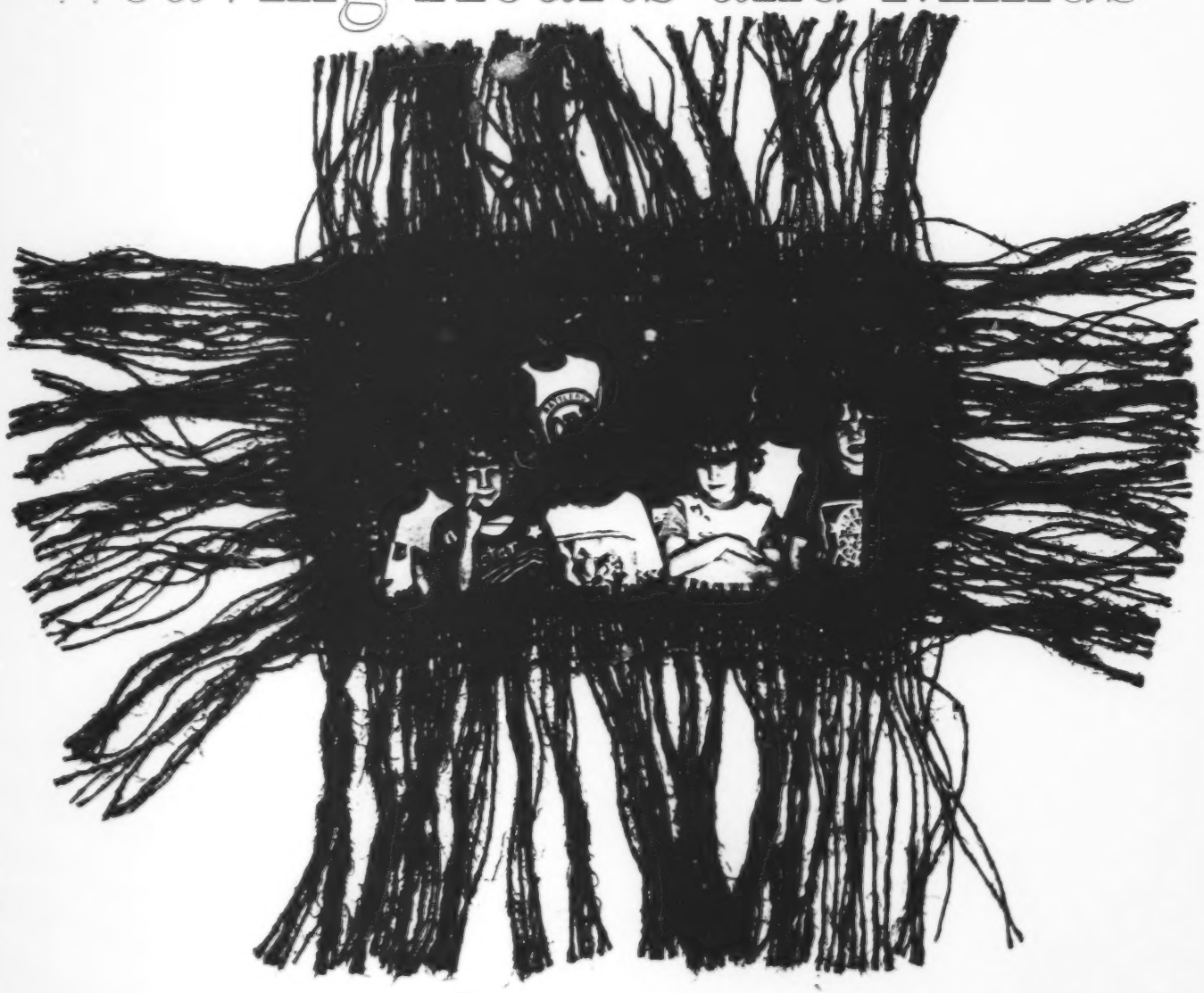
Intergenerational Programs:

Weaving Hearts and Minds



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This publication was produced by the Florida Council on Aging. The mission of the Florida Council on Aging is to enhance the quality of life for all older Floridians and promote a positive image of aging through advocacy, information sharing and education.

Intergenerational Programs: Weaving Hearts and Minds was written and edited by Margaret Lynn Duggar & Associates, Inc. by Margaret Lynn Duggar, April Henkel, Menza Mitchell, and Julie Voich.

We would like to thank the following people and organizations for their contributions to this publication.

Florida Department of Education

Commissioner Betty Castor
Dr. Lanny Larson, Director, Division of Vocational, Adult & Community Education
John E. Lawrence, Chief, Bureau of Adult and Community Education
Eugene R. Stafford, Director, Special Programs, Bureau of Adult and Community Education
Robert Potsko, Program Specialist, Bureau of Adult and Community Education
Judy F. Meyer, Director, Office of Business & Citizen Partnerships
Susan F. Walton, Intergenerational Coordinator
Randy Lewis, Director of Communications
Ann Kozeliski, Public Information Director, Office of Communications
Angelo Riley, Publications Production Specialist
Kathryn Seitz, Illustrator
Julia Wilson, Information Specialist

Linda Abele and Sealey Elementary School, Tallahassee, Florida
All of the educators, volunteers, program coordinators, and intergenerational participants who help to weave hearts and minds every day in the state of Florida.

(For additional copies, please contact)

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Florida Council on Aging
1018 Thomasville Road
Box C-2
Tallahassee, Florida 32303
(904)222-8877

Florida Department of Education
Bureau of Adult &
Community Education
325 W. Gaines Street, Room 1244
Tallahassee, Florida 32399
(904)487-4929

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325 W. Gaines Street, Room 126
Tallahassee, Florida 32399
(904)488-8385

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Intergenerational Programs: Weaving Hearts and Minds is funded by adult education which is supported 100% by Federal funds through the Department of Education, State of Florida, Betty Castor, Commissioner.

"Intergenerational programs do more than bridge the generation gap. They form strong, meaningful friendships that create a supportive atmosphere for learning, while promoting self-worth and accomplishment for both youth and seniors."

BETTY CASTOR,
COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION
STATE OF FLORIDA

"Intergenerational activity is more important than ever. Not only has mobility separated the generations, but now political factions would pit the young against the old for limited state and federal resources. There is simply no substitute for one-on-one interaction to sustain positive relationships between the ages."

GERALD BUCHERT,
PRESIDENT,
FLORIDA COUNCIL ON AGING

DIRECTOR,
SUNSHINE CENTERS/OFFICE ON
AGING, ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA

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What is Intergenerational Programming?

Intergenerational programs span age groups. While intergenerational programs often involve the young and the old exchanging knowledge, skills or caring, intergenerational programs also involve middle-aged or younger adults with youth or older persons. Programs are intergenerational because participants span age groups.[1]

Intergenerational programming is an interaction that unites persons of all ages and backgrounds by sharing talents and resources in mutually beneficial relationships. It can involve families, friends, neighbors or community members who represent different generations. The National Council on Aging has defined intergenerational programming as "activities or programs that increase cooperation, interaction or exchange between any two generations. It involves the sharing of skills, knowledge or experience between old and young."

Today, intergenerational programming is emerging as a significant and exciting human services movement as evidenced by the recent surge of intergenerational program initiatives. Florida's increasing elderly population, along with new residential and educational patterns of living, have combined to make the meaningful interaction between youth, young adults, and the elderly even more important in the future.[2] Every generation has something meaningful to give each other, and society. This publication celebrates intergenerational programming by spotlighting the success and diversity of Florida's many programs.

> *"Somehow we have to get older people back close to growing children if we are to restore a sense of community, a knowledge of the past, and a sense of the future."*
>
> *Margaret Mead*

Who Participates & Who Benefits

By promoting intergenerational programs where youth and older persons benefit from helping each other, we can create the kind of society in which there is concern for everyone's needs. Intergenerational programs address three basic community needs:

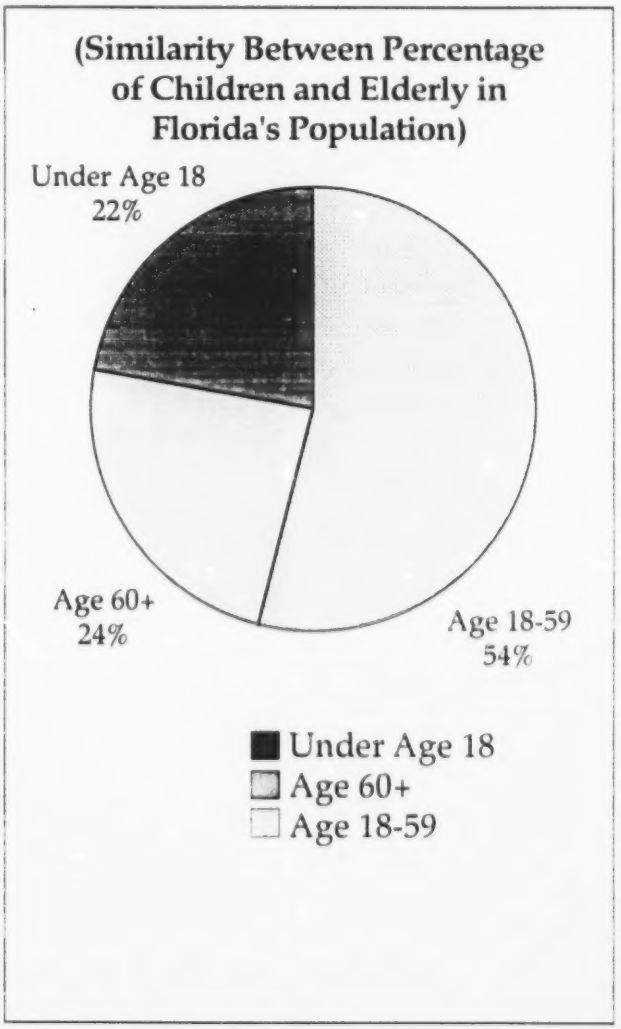
Human-increased opportunities for personal enrichment and empowerment for all ages;

Economic-cost-effective use of financial and human assets; and

Political-broad-based citizen understanding and support for children, youth and aging services.

Additional community benefits include services to underserved populations such as nursing-home residents, children with disabilities, and youth-at-risk.[3]

As more local communities realize the benefits of such cost-effective service delivery, citizens offer broader support. With intergenerational programming, everyone is a winner: the individuals, the community, and the state.



Older Persons

- In 1990, 23.6% of Florida's population was age 60 or older.

- The number of Floridians 60 years and older is projected to increase by 57% between the year 1990 and 2010.

- Volunteerism among older persons is rising. According to a 1990 Gallup study, 47% of Americans between the ages of 65 and 74 volunteered an average of four hours per week.

- Of all the persons in the history of the world who have ever lived to age 65, two-thirds are alive today.

- The U.S. Census Bureau projects life expectancy at birth in the year 2000 to be 74 years for men and 80 years for women.

- The National Center for Health Statistics reported that in 1989, 20 million U.S. households were headed by persons over age 60.

Youth and Families

- In 1990, 22.3% of Florida's population was under 18 years of age.

- 45.3% of Florida's African-American children under six years of age were living below the poverty level in 1990.

- There were 525,446 At-Risk Youth in Florida under 18 years of age (18.7% of all children) living below the poverty level in 1990.

- 52,903 youth in Florida were reported as runaways in 1991/92.

- 22.5% of Florida's citizens under 18 lived in single parent households and 11.8% lived in a household headed by neither parent in 1990.

- Recent Bureau of Statistics reports indicate that 53% of mothers with children under age six are in the workforce.

Source: 1990 U.S. Census and "Key Facts About Florida's Children and Families," Florida Center for Children & Youth, Tallahassee, Florida (1993).

Intergenerational Programs:

- Expand the range of supports available for youth, families and older persons.
- Act as an advocacy mechanism for young and old.
- Build a sense of community.
- Bring together service providers by addressing the needs of all ages through cooperative efforts and pooled resources.
- Increase community awareness about issues that affect older adults and youth.
- Provide for the understanding of shared values and respect for individuals in all life stages.
- Prevent unnatural age segregation in our society.
- Allow the strengths of both generations to meet the needs of the other.
- Offer society a historical perspective with experience of the old combined with the idealism and energy of the young.
- Provide necessary community-based services for special populations such as disabled persons, the frail elderly, and at-risk youth.
- Promote interdependence across the generations.
- Provide a way to express the natural bonds between older adults and younger persons.

...*The Challenge*

Most persons living and working in communities across our state and nation today experience the multiple stresses of everyday life. Children need the nurturing and caring of mature adults, while older persons benefit from sharing the knowledge, skills and experiences accumulated over a lifetime. Persons who are connected to others and their communities live healthier, happier lives.

Communities are fortunate to have the resources older residents bring to help meet the myriad of needs they face daily. Older persons represent Florida's and the nation's fastest growing age segment. Statistics show that at least 85% of older citizens will be independent, healthy adults.[4]

The challenge is finding new and creative ways to bring the generations together. Community programs that match the needs of one generation with the resources of another need to be expanded and replicated. Grassroots organizing, volunteer recruitment and training, and coordination of programs all need financial support. Resource grants to communities could stimulate development of valuable programs.

The challenge is creating organizational structures that meet the human development needs of all generations--those who have talents and abilities to share **and** those who wish to grow and learn, no matter what age they are.

The challenge **in this complex society is how best to bring people together to support each other, to learn together and to share learning experiences.**

It's "Popcorn Day" at Sealey Elementary School, Tallahassee, Florida.

Intergenerational Programs in Florida Today:
Profiles

The following program profiles are just a small sample of some of Florida's many intergenerational activities. They reflect diversity in scope of the programming, administrative complexity, and funding sources.

Name of Intergenerational Program: ASPEC (ACADEMY OF SENIOR PROFESSIONALS AT ECKERD COLLEGE)
Agency: ECKERD COLLEGE
Address: 4200 54th Avenue, South
City/State/Zip: St. Petersburg, Florida 33711
Contact Person: Arthur Peterson
Phone: 813/864-8226

Program Description: A well-planned multi-generational learning program that recognizes that men and women who have retired from careers have not retired their minds. The program is intergenerational in nature because it utilizes the experience and knowledge of older adults in college classroom settings with younger adults. Both age groups benefit from the exchange.

Year Program Began: 1980.

Goals: To allow participants in the program to broaden their intellectual horizons and enhance their cultural lives through active involvement with various college constituencies and larger communities.

Strengths of Program: It recognizes the vast resources of wisdom and experience of older people, and taps into those assets on behalf of students of all ages, strengthening the liberal arts curriculum in general and adding to the quality of learning for those from 6-86 whom the program touches.

Name of Intergenerational Program: RAINBOW INTERGENERATIONAL CHILD CARE
Agency: LITTLE HAVANA ACTIVITIES & NUTRITION CENTER
Major Partners: Senior Centers, Libraries, Health Centers, etc.
Address: 700 S.W. 8 Street
City/State/Zip: Miami, Florida 33130
Contact Person: A. Cecilia Hunt
Phone: 305/858-0887

Program Description: Child Care Services for pre-schoolers (2-5 years old).

Year Program Began: 1989 in Little Havana (44 children), 1992 in Miami Beach (60 children).

Goal(s): To provide quality, affordable child care, while generating meaningful part-time jobs for seniors.

Hours of Service Provided Per Month (average): 11 hours daily (220/month).

Special Events/Projects: Monthly celebrations; holidays and special occasions are shared with seniors of the senior center.

Strengths of Program: Strengthening of family concept. High staff retention provides for children.

Weaknesses of Program: Need for training materials available in Spanish.

Materials Developed: All seminars provided in early childhood education; training for senior child care workers (in English and Spanish- "How to" manual to develop an intergenerational child care program (available at no charge).

Name of Intergenerational Program: SCHOOL MENTORS
Agency: ESCAMBIA COUNTY COUNCIL ON AGING, INC.
Major Partners: Escambia County School System and RSVP/ Council on Aging
Address: 21 S. Tarragona Street/P.O. Box 17066
City/State/Zip: Pensacola, Florida 32522-7066
Contact Person: Pam Wells
Phone: 904/432-1475

Program Description: Retired Senior Volunteer Program provides tutoring and mentoring for kindergarten through 12th grade in 13 area schools.

Year Program Began: 1988.

Goals: To provide students with one-on-one attention and enhance their skills in reading, math, physics, and other areas of studies.

Hours of Service Provided Per Month (average): 2 to 6 hours per week.

Strengths of Program: Provides children with positive service role model and builds self-esteem. Gives the service a productive outlet for talents and contributes to continued general well-being.

Weaknesses of Program: Very little funding; greater need for additional volunteers.

Materials Developed: Existing materials are used on-site within school system.

Comments: We are looking to expand our role in the school system through the Rockin' Readers Program in the kindergarten and establishing alliances with other groups such as Junior Achievement.

Name of Intergenerational Program: MY FAVORITE OLDER PERSON ESSAY CONTEST
Agency: CITY OF ORLANDO SENIOR ADVISORY BOARD DOWNTOWN DAY COMMITTEE
Major Partners: SeaWorld, SunBank, North Orlando Kiwanis Club, Matthew Ortho Clinic, Pizza Hut, Orange County School Board.
Address: c/o Winter Park Adult Day Center, 230 Perth Lane
City/State/Zip: Winter Park, Florida 32792
Contact Person: Christine Lecher
Phone: 407/629-5771

Program Description: Essay contest for grade 5 in Orange County School District to express their feelings about an older person who has influenced their life or made a contribution to the community.

Year Program Began: 1993.

Goal(s):
(1) Provide a positive aspect on aging.
(2) Reinforce positive aspects of having a relationship with an older person.
(3) Involve the community.

Special Events/Projects: Senior Downtown Day opening ceremony event.

Strengths of Program: (1) First time opportunity for children to write about their feelings on older persons; (2) support of the school board and community corporations; (3) short in duration; and (4) reward system for voluntary participation by students.

Weaknesses of Program: (1) First time teachers need to support the project, and (2) students needed encouragement to participate.

Comments: Support by the community at large was positive and responsive. This will be an annual event held during Older Americans Month Celebrations (May).

My Special Older Person

Every time I am discouraged I think of what my grandfather would do. I think of him because he has achieved things that I someday hope to achieve, and has experienced some of life's greatest pleasures that I too hope to experience.

When he was 15 years old, he came over on a boat to America from Cuba. He knew very little English. He attended high school in New York City in the evening and started to work in the day. He also attended college courses in the evening and continued doing that for about 15 years to get a college degree, while still trying to manage a family also.

He fought in World War II and injured his right leg while trying to save his friends. My grandfather earned six "Purple Hearts" while he was in the military.

He retired from the military and became a teacher and then a dean for Colonial High School. He retired Again and now volunteers 5 days a week! At 70 years old, he is still going strong!!

(left to right) Mayor Glenda Hood, Beth Hardy, and Richard Ortega

My grandfather is also very encouraging. When I get B's he gets mad, and when a Cuban gets mad watch out! But when I get A's, he rewards me with Savings Bonds, and inspires me to stretch my mind and ability.

My grandfather never ceases to amaze me, with all the awards and honors he has, he still strives to get more! He is a good example to children, adults, or anyone who has witnessed this fine man's work! Now you can see why I think my grandfather is a great man and worthy of this honor.

By:Beth Hardy
Mrs. Russell's Fifth Grade
Ventura Elementary School
Orlando, Florida

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Name of Intergenerational Program: BRIDGE BUILDING
Agency: ESCAMBIA COUNTY COUNCIL ON AGING, INC.
Major Partners: 12th Avenue Headstart (Rainbow) and The Woman's Home Adult Congregate Living Facility
Address: 21 S. Tarragona St./P. O. Box 17066
City/State/Zip: Pensacola, Florida 32522-7066
Contact Person: Pam Wells
Phone: 904/432-1475

Program Description: Intergenerational get-togethers between 2-5 year old disadvantaged children and 74-95 year-olds on a consistent basis. It connects both groups and is almost circular in design from the beginning of life to the ending.

Year Program Began: 1990.

Goals: To instill a sense of purpose and *I am needed by my community* feeling among elderly participants.

Hours of Service Provided Per Month (average): 6 hours once every 3 months.

Special Events/Projects: Holiday parties and visitations. Each group (old and young) designs a program of poetry, stories, riddles and songs for presentation. Afterwards, treats and handmade presents are exchanged.

Strengths of Program: Benefits of self worth these 2-5 year-olds and 74-95 year olds gain from this experience.

Weaknesses of Program: Not budgeted, so dependent on outside financial support when food or gifts are involved.

Comments: Originated by project director, residents at the Woman's Home decide how they want things done anew each time. This creates more participation. Once an occasion to get together is created, the project director and head teacher from Headstart set a date and time.

Name of Intergenerational Program: HANDS ACROSS THE AGES
Agency: ST. PETERSBURG OFFICE ON AGING/
SUNSHINE CENTER
Major Partners: The St. Petersburg Office on Aging, Juvenile Welfare Board, Florida Power Corporation, Edward White Hospital, and the Area Agency on Aging.
Address: 330 Fifth Street North (P.O. Box 2842)
City/State/Zip: St. Petersburg, Florida 33701 (33731)
Contact Person: Gerald J. Buchert, Director
Phone: 813/893-7102

Program Description: A four hour workshop which includes a discussion of the myths and stereotypes of older and younger people; an impairment activity which sensitizes young people to physical and emotional losses as one ages as well as mechanisms and adjustments which help compensate for these losses.

Year Program Began: 1987.

Goals:
(1) A workshop designed to increase the sensitivity and understanding of teenagers toward older people and vice versa.
(2) To increase the participants' understanding and acceptance of their own aging as a natural and exciting process.
(3) To stimulate young people to volunteer in agencies that serve older people.

Hours of Service Provided Per Month (average): Quarterly with 2-3 high schools and periodically with middle and elementary schools.

Materials Developed: Hand-Out (available at no charge, contact Gerald Buchert at 813/893-7102).

Comments: When the program first started, the emphasis was on sensitizing the group to older people; after several sessions, it became clear that older people benefited from the interaction just as much as younger participants.

Name of Intergenerational Program: SUNSHINE SINGERS INTERGENERATIONAL CHORUS
Agency: ST. PETERSBURG OFFICE ON AGING/ SUNSHINE CENTER
Major Partners: St. Petersburg Office on Aging/Sunshine Center and Juvenile Welfare Board
Address: 330 Fifth Street North (P. O. Box 2842)
City/State/Zip: St. Petersburg, Florida 33701 (33731)
Contact Person: Gerald J. Buchert, Director
Phone: 813/893-7102

Program Description: A chorus of singers age 3 to 83.

Year Program Began: 1990.

Goals: To stimulate creative interaction between persons of all ages and educate the community about intergenerational activity through public concerts.

Special Events/Projects: This group has sung at the Neighborly Senior Services Banquet, the 1990 Aging Network Training Conference in Orlando, the Older Americans Month Celebration at the Marriott Retirement Center in Ft. Myers, and many Pinellas County community activities.

Materials Developed: A 30 minute video tape "Every Age is a Good Age" available for loan free of charge from the St. Petersburg Office on Aging P.O. Box 2842, St. Petersburg, Florida 33731. Members wrote and produced intergenerational song.

Comments: The video is an excellent commentary on the strengths of intergenerational activity.

On Saturday I'm proud to say
I'll be seventy-five years old
And though I feel my life's been full
I know there's so much more.

I started back to school last year
I'm earning my degree
I work with children at Sixth Street Public School
You should see them smile at me!
I see the beauty in all ages --
It's so good to be alive

Oh, I'll have such a special year
When I am seventy-five.

REPEAT CHORUS
And six years is such a good age
Thirteen is really neat too
Thirty-six years old is a good, good age
At seventy-five-- so much to do!

I'm ready to begin.

(Song written by Jack Hartmann)

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Name of Intergenerational Program: THE SILVER LINERS
Agency: RETIRED SENIOR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM (RSVP)
Major Partners: Bay County District Schools.
Address: 1116 Frankford Avenue
City/State/Zip: Panama City, Florida 32401
Contact Person: Martha Pledger
Phone: 904/769-3468

Program Description: Line dancing group of seniors over 60.

Year Program Began: 1991.

Goals: To encourage senior adults to get involved in school activities sharing their talents and experience.

Hours of Service Provided Per Month (average): 2 hours per volunteer. 10-15 volunteers.

Special Events/Projects: Schools have special days to honor America's heritage.

Strengths of Program: Helps to develop positive attitudes about aging, shows students that seniors can remain active and healthy no matter the age.

Weaknesses of Program: Need more time to present program.

Materials Developed: Video and audio tapes.

Comments: After seeing this group perform and interacting with them, the students realize that adults can have a lot of fun and enjoy being healthy and active.

Name of Intergenerational Program: FOSTER GRANDPARENT PROGRAMS, STATE OF FLORIDA
Agency: ACTION
Major Partners: Foster Grandparent Programs are federally funded Older American Volunteer Programs authorized by Title II of the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973 and administered by ACTION.
Address: ACTION State Office, 3165 McCrory Place, Saratoga Building, Suite 115
City/State/Zip: Orlando, Florida 32803
Contact Person: Janna Steinke, President, FGP/SCP Directors Association of Florida, 150 East First Street, Jacksonville, Florida 32206
Phone: 904/630-0995

Program Description: The Foster Grandparent Program, established in 1965, provides opportunities for low-income persons 60 and over to work with children with special needs. Foster Grandparents (FGs) work 20 hours per week, and receive a stipend of $2.45 per hour for their efforts.

Year Program Began: 1965.

Goals: Foster Grandparents bring an openness and sensitivity to the challenges of helping troubled children. The FGP volunteers benefit the institutions in which they operate, improving staff morale and generating new insights.

Hours of Service Provided Per Month (average): 72,000 hours of service per month in Florida.

Special Events/Projects: Various intergenerational activities are held.

Strengths of Program: Provides unique service built on the natural bond between young and old. It is a bridge that connects generations in need. The Foster Grandparent Program matches the patience and experience of age with the resilience and energy of youth.

Name of Intergenerational Program: ROCKIN' READERS
Agency: ALACHUA COUNTY SCHOOL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM
Major Partners: Florida Department of Education, Office of Business & Citizen Partnerships (904/488-8385).
Address: 3700 N.E. 53rd Avenue
City/State/Zip: Gainesville, Florida 32609
Contact Person: Marge Baker
Phone: 904/336-2760

Program Description: Rockin' Readers is a volunteer program designed to impact at-risk children between the ages of 4 and 7 who have tested below their peer group in language development and pre-reading skills. Each child meets individually once a week with his special "Rockin' Reader" volunteer who reads to him in a caring and supportive manner.
Year Program Began: 1989-90 school year.
Goal(s): Each child will demonstrate increased language and pre-reading skills as well as enhanced self-esteem and emotional maturity.
Hours of Service Provided Per Month (average): Approximately one-half hour per week of one-to-one attention per child, or about two and one-half hours per child per month.
Strengths of Program: Helps young children acquire the skills needed for learning to read, fosters in them an appreciation of literature and a love of reading, and helps them develop enhanced self-esteem and emotional maturity through a nurturing relationship with a caring adult.
Weakensses of Program: Requires coordination and staff time to recruit, train, match, oversee, nurture, and recognize the volunteers.
Materials Developed: Training manuals for the program coordinator and for the volunteer readers.

Comments: This program is particularly popular with senior volunteers who enjoy reading to young children. It does not require a tremendous commitment of time or extensive training.

How To Get Involved...

One of the wonderful things about planning intergenerational activities is that the types of programs possible are limited only by one's imagination, and activities are easily adaptable to a particular community's needs and demographics. The program profiles listed in this publication are just a few examples. In every community there are seniors, young adults, teens, and children who can participate and interact in a variety of ways.

If you have an idea for an intergenerational activity in your community, or would like to become involved in an established local program or event, contact the following organizations in your community:

Councils on Aging

Retired Senior Volunteer Programs (RSVP)

Area Agencies on Aging

Senior Citizens Centers

Adult & Community Education Centers and Public Schools

Civic Organizations

Recreation Centers

Religious Organizations

Foster Grandparents Programs

Literacy Projects

Libraries

Retirement Communities

Nursing Homes

Volunteer Centers

Arts/Cultural Centers

Help is also available at the state level. For further assistance, contact:

Florida Council on Aging
1018 Thomasville Road
Box C-2
Tallahassee, Florida 32303
(904)222-8877

Florida Department of Education
Bureau of Adult &
Community Education
325 W. Gaines Street, Room 1244
Tallahassee, Florida 32399
(904)487-4929

Florida Department of Education
Office of Business & Citizen
Partnerships
325 W. Gaines Street, Room 126
Tallahassee, Florida 32399
(904)488-8385

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[2]Kaplan, Matt. "Recruiting Senior Adult Volunteers for Intergenerational Programs: Working to Create a 'Jump on the Bandwagon' Effect." Hawaii Pacific University. The Journal of Applied Gerontology, Volume 12, Number 1, March 1993. The Southern Gerontological Society: Department of Sociology, North Carolina Central University: Durham, North Carolina.

[3]"Everyone Wins with Intergenerational Programs." Friends of Parks & Recreation. Volume 3, Number 1. National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA): Arlington, Virginia (1993).

[4]"Lifelong Learning For An Aging Society." Special Committee on Aging, United States Senate. Serial No. 102-R, October 1992: Washington, D.C.

"It's easier to teach all year than to figure out where to go on vacation!"

Profile of Izzie
Lifelong Learning Society
Florida Atlantic University
Boca Raton, Florida

Isidor Siegel (Izzie to his friends) began at an early age drawing "faces." Later on, he learned they were called "portraits" and has continued drawing them from life ever since. He received a B.F.A. from Florida Atlantic University and an M.A. from Columbia University, and is a life member of the Art Student's League and a graduate of Cooper Union University in New York City. His love of art has sustained him through the Depression, the war, and his life as a naval officer in Pensacola and the Philippines. After retirement he joined the Boca Raton Museum of Art and has taught at the Boca Museum Art School since 1980, teaching four 3-hour classes each week all year. But, as he says: "It's easier to teach all year than to figure out where to go on vacation!" His enthusiasm for instruction in drawing using portraits as a vehicle is enticing as Izzie will invite you to his class by saying: "It's a lot of fun, you really must come!"

"I'll tell anyone that is retired and still feels young at heart, this is the program to be in. After my four hours, I go home happy, knowing that I have helped some baby that needed tender love and care. I enjoy every minute of it."

Dear Friend,

When I retired from the Leon County School System, I said to myself, "This is the life, staying home, to sew, write poems and work in my yard."

One morning I found out that was not enough for me to do. I heard about this program (the Foster Grandparent Program) through a friend. When I walked into Deborah Davis' office, I liked her right away. At the Northwood Mall Center, my first volunteer station, I loved it dearly. I help the toddlers, teaching them to color, paint and sing songs. Now that I'm at TAP (Teenage Parent Program) with children two weeks old to one year old, every morning I'm happy to see young mothers bringing in their babies. I assist them with changing their babies, or giving them a bottle, or just to sing or talk in a soft voice to the child. This program means a lot to me. Every morning I look forward to going to the station. It gives me a new lease on life. Our Coordinator Deborah Davis is a joy to know. I also enjoy going to inservice training. You learn so much about what other agencies have to offer seniors. I'll tell anyone that is retired and still feels young at heart, this is the program to be in. After my four hours, I go home happy, knowing that I have helped some baby who was crying, fed a baby that was hungry, or have read a book or rocked a child that needed tender love and care. I enjoy every minute of it.

Mrs. Eddie Mae Bennett
Elder Care Services
Foster Grandparent Program
Tallahassee, Florida

"I feel good when I make people laugh, it's like a high, without drugs. I'm going to be 69 years old May 23, and all I want for a birthday present is to stay well and enjoy my family and be a clown."

Dear Friend,

My name is Goldie Garshell, I'm a Senior Citizen, lived on Miami Beach for twenty years and I've been lucky to have good health and I'm active, in acting, trying out for commercials, have my own cat sitting business. Always busy. I'm married to Leo Garshell who is an insurance consultant and he is 73 years old and works all day long 6 days a week. Insurance statistics prove that being active keeps you young and healthy and happy. When a person sits around being bored it's instant old. We are surrounded by Senior Citizens where I live, the ages range from 70 years up. All my neighbors are at least 70 years old. I got involved in the senior Education program, a friend told me about the Clown Class. My first thought was I could help by visiting nursing homes and children's cancer homes, since I'm grateful for my good luck and I would like to share and spread a little happiness. Being a clown is fun and it's easy to act. The outfit and the appearance starts people laughing before you say a word. People will speak to a clown very easily because it's make believe or more friendly, it's hard to say why? People speak to me when I'm dressed as a clown. Questions are: "Why are you dressed like that? What are you supposed to be doing? What makes you a clown?" In closing, I will say that I feel good when I make people laugh, it's like a high, without drugs. I'm going to be 69 years old May 23, and all I want for a birthday present is to stay well and enjoy my family and be a clown.

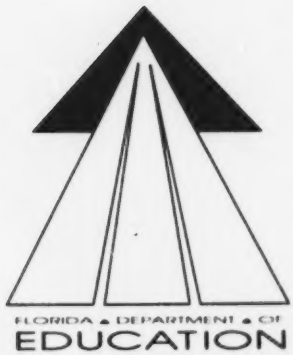
Goldie Garshell
Elders Institute
Florida International University
North Miami, Florida

"Like helping the elderly in the community as I have done for a lifetime, I feel that it is time for me to also help the younger generation- the nation's tomorrow."

Dear Friend,

I have always worked diligently in the Jackson County Community, and have always loved to assist others in any way I could, but I did not really perceive how deeply I loved working with youngsters until I became involved in the Foster Grandparent Program. I work at the Dozier School for Boys and I love it. Having two children as young adults of my own allowed me to understand the difficulties these youngsters are facing in today's society. I have always wanted to be a teacher but because of financial difficulties I was unable to become one. But now, although in my seniority, my lifetime dream has been fulfilled. Like helping the elderly in the community as I have done for a lifetime, I feel that it is time for me to also help the younger generation - the nation's tomorrow. My experience at Dozier has taught me that patience is a precious virtue and love is indeed a valuable asset. Being an "Empty Nest" parent I look forward to spending each day with the boys at Dozier. I love each one of them in their own special way, because they fulfill the emptiness that is needed for me to continue helping others in my community and also keep me active and "on my toes" in my older age. I relish my work even more so, because of the intrigue that is brought to each day that I serve as a foster grandparent. However, through all that I have done and hope to do in the Community (and especially through the Foster Grandparent Program) I label myself as just another instrument for God and hope that positive results that are produced through my involvement in this program proves that my living is not in vain.

Elleen Bowers
Foster Grandparent
Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys
Marianna, Florida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